

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

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THE LIFE OF THE SAILOR

One who has served for four years as a Naval Chaplain gives the following picture of naval life. We print it in view of the Sunday appointed for special prayers for seamen, July 9th.

"On July 9th Christian people will be offering prayers specially for the men of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy. This year our first thought must be one of thanksgiving for the victories in all parts of the world which have been granted to our naval arms. The stirring events in Italy and France and the safe conduct of so many of our convoys to all parts of the world during the past year have been possible only through combined action in which the Navy has taken its full part and successfully concluded the tasks which were allotted to it. For the skilful planning and the steadfastness of all, who, in many varying directions, have contributed to these victories, we offer our sincere thanks to God.

"But in time of success we must not forget the dreary daily toil and constant vigil which are the seaman's usual companions. It is easy to romance about a life on the ocean wave. But those who have served know little of the glamour with which popular imagination has surrounded the sailor's life. At the best of times his calling requires him to be always ready for any emergency; in wartime that vigilance has to be many times increased, as he sails surrounded by the dangers of enemy attack. His work must often be carried out in the most uncongenial extremes of climate. He must spend much time in unattractive parts of the world, far away from home. His ship is never luxurious, and frequently uncomfortable. Modern warfare has no romance to relieve its horrors. Moreover he has the supremely difficult task of being at every moment ready for action which may have consequences of great importance. The time

when the Navy is in action in the course of a war can be measured in minutes and hours; the time of waiting must be measured in months and years. The strain of remaining at full efficiency month after month, ready at any time for action which may affect the whole future course of the war, is a heavy burden for men to bear, and the success of the Navy may be measured by the fact that it has fulfilled its obligations under these conditions, when the call has come. But we should all realize the cost in human labour and sacrifice at which their successes have been achieved. As a modern naval novelist has written, 'You may think that sailors are always what they seem to be when they're ashore, carefree, happy-go-lucky, clean. But at sea they are dirty, unromantic and damp. Forget the sailor with the navy-blue eyes and remember the one with his stomach torn out by a red-hot tracer shell.'

"All this applies with redoubled significance to the men of the Merchant Navy. They are not fighting men: their ships are not fighting ships, equipped as is a man-of-war, with all the latest scientific devices for protection against the enemy. But they have had to endure the full fury of the enemy, who has lashed out against them with all his ferocity and ingenuity. That they have so valiantly carried on their tasks in the face of these perils excites our deepest admiration and gratitude, and it must be with profound relief that we hear of the successful measures against the enemy, which have rendered the work of the Merchant Fleets so much safer than could have been expected eighteen months ago.

"The Navy has still great dangers and stern tasks ahead of it, and the battles which still remain to be fought in distant parts of the world will entail long periods of separation from home and loved ones. But confidently we can commend our seamen to the

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keeping of Almighty God, praying that he will uphold them in physical and spiritual dangers to which they will be subjected, and that they may soon be able 'to return in safety and to enjoy the blessing of the land with the fruits of their labour, and a thankful remembrance of all God's mercies to them.'"

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK ON LASTING PEACE

In his Presidential Address to the York Diocesan Conference on June 27th, the Archbishop said:

"There is a strong and growing conviction that no nation must ever again be allowed to plunge mankind into war. It is true this was the resolve at the end of the last war. Why did we then so lamentably fail in our efforts to banish war? The answer is clear, the peace-loving nations put their trust in sentiment, reasonableness and self-interest. They felt if they talked sufficiently about the evils of war, passed a sufficient number of resolutions in favour of peace, and signed a sufficient number of peace pledges, the demon of war would be exorcised. But this attitude was all the time encouraging the aggressor nations to arm without hindrance, and to assume that the democracies would submit to any injustice rather than defend themselves.

"The chief hope for the future peace of the world is that the three great allies winning the war should continue the closest co-operation when Germany and Japan are conquered. I have had the privilege in the last nine months of paying short visits to Russia and the United States: I came away from Russia profoundly impressed with the immense resources and determination of that country, and equally impressed with the resources, vitality and energy of the people of the United States. If these three peoples, the United States, Russia and ourselves stood together determined to stop any future outbreak of war the peace of the world would be secure. In every possible way we must cultivate good understanding and co-operation between the allies, and differences of internal policy should not stand in the way of this.

"I am not suggesting that the world for all time should be controlled by the three allies; this would be as undesirable as it would be impractical. As they recover, other nations, especially China, France and our gallant allies among the smaller nations, should take their place with us. We should do all in our power to hasten this day. Eventually all nations should take, each according to its power, some responsibility for the preservation of peace. But for some time

to come the three great allies will alone have the resources to do this effectively.

"The Churches have a great responsibility and opportunity in working for the peace of mankind. It is surely a most hopeful sign that the Church of England is on terms of increasing friendship both with the great Orthodox Churches in the East and with the very large non-episcopal Churches both here and in the United States. Last autumn I had a most friendly welcome from both the Patriarchs of Russia and of Alexandria, and this year from the leaders of the non-episcopal Churches of America. The welcome was given to me as representing the Anglican Church. Close and friendly intercourse between the Church of England and the Church of Russia should do much to bring their two peoples closer. I deeply regret the death of the Venerable Patriarch of Moscow, a man of great courage and wisdom, but I know that the Archbishops who were most closely associated with him will continue his friendship and we look eagerly forward to the day when this friendship will be strengthened by the return visit of a delegation from the Church of Russia. The questions of doctrine and order which still divide Christendom should not prevent all Christians from co-operating in creating the atmosphere of good will which is essential for the establishment of peace. . . ."

AMERICAN CHURCH CHALLENGED WITH DUTY TO RETURNING SERVICE MEN

The Church Times of America for May 27th carries the following interesting report:—

Baltimore, Md.—A rousing challenge to the Christian Church in America to "prepare now for the homecoming of service men and women, or suffer the sure consequences of irreparable losses" was issued by the National Conference on the Ministry of the Church to Returning Service Men and Women here.

The two-day meeting, attended by some 200 delegates representing many denominational and interdenominational agencies, was jointly sponsored by the Service Men's Christian League, the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains, the Federal Council's Commission on Religion and Health, and the Christian Commission for Camp and Community Activities. The five sessions, held at the First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, featured speakers drawn from governmental agencies, the Army and Navy chaplaincies, educational and health circles as well as Church bodies.

Presiding over the conference was Dr. William Barrow Pugh, stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.) and chairman of both the Service Men's Christian League and the General Commission.

In his opening address, Dr. Pugh warned that "if the Church is not alive to its immediate and pressing task to minister effectively to discharged members of the armed forces," many of whom are already being returned to civilian life, America will be faced with a repetition of the tidal wave of sensuality and vulgarity and corruption that followed the close of the last war.

"The fundamental problem of the Church," he said, "is to see to it that the stopping of this war is not worse than its prosecution. If men are to emerge from an existence dedicated to killing and the employment of brute force, it will be by religious conviction, by the faith of individuals who believe that God intends man to be free but pure.

"Our concern must be that they emerge from their present narrow existence into one of wider interests, sounder judgments, and equipped with materials—physical and spiritual—necessary to taking on mature roles in a democratic and Christian state."

The Real Problem

Taking sharp issue with "abstract theorizing" of churchmen who see returning service men as "problems to be solved," Chaplain Edgar H. S. Chandler, Third Naval District Chaplain, New York City, stated that "the Church, not the men themselves, is the real problem in the ministry to returning veterans."

The chaplain bluntly attacked disparagers of "foxhole and liferaft" religion. He said "man's extremity is now, as ever, God's opportunity," and that in foxholes and on liferafts many service men are having a real and vital spiritual experience, the value of which the Church should capitalize upon rather than carp at.

"Measuring such experience against the ivory-tower kind one sees too frequently in organized religion," he said, "the difference is that this turning to God in times of extremity at least has the value of being as real as it is intense."

Chaplain Chandler, who spent a year in the Aleutians prior to his present assignment, and who was in England during the Battle of Britain, said he doubted that men and women will return from the Service disillusioned.

"They went into the Service disillusioned," he averred. "They went into this war reluctantly, many of them cynically. Now, in most cases, that disillusion has dropped away, and I have watched them as they grew, under fire, into a broad understanding of what freedom and faith mean.

They've seen what Nazi and Japanese doctrines do to human personality. And while they may not go for shibboleth and ballyhoo, and are suspicious of all propaganda, they have come to appreciate and believe in the fundamental values of democracy and Christian faith."

Again throwing the onus of "being a problem" upon the Church itself, he said people who worry about the morals of soldiers should know that they worry about the morals of the folks back home.

"The stories of strikes by labour unions who exploit the national emergency for their own advantage have given rise to much anger and bitterness. Stories of juvenile delinquency—in which they sometime fear their own sweethearts and wives may be involved—disturb them. They are equally angry at those who play the black markets or avoid their responsibilities in taxation or the buying of bonds.

"They express concern about any evidence of racial antagonism or religious persecution at a time when we are fighting systems which have flourished on bigotry. And they ask: 'What is the Church doing on the home front to combat these enemies of the cause for which we fight and die?'"

A BROADCAST MESSAGE TO BRITISH CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

The following is the text of an address given in a recent service broadcast to British listeners in Europe:—

Since the dawning of D-Day, that narrow strip of water which we call the Channel is no longer a barrier but a bridge, once more linking Britain to the Continent of Europe. It is fitting, therefore, that to-day—in this cross-Channel broadcast—we should take as our subject the mutual relationships of Christian people on both sides of the water.

I suppose it is true to say that the separation which has isolated Britain from the Continent during the last four years has been more complete than at any time since St. Augustine stepped on to the shores of Kent. The time-honoured commerce between Britain and the parent Continent has been practically at a standstill. It is perhaps true, on the other hand, that the spiritual link between Christian people on each side of the Channel has been closer during this four years than for many centuries. It is not only that we have all been thrown together into the miseries of modern war. There has been a quite new interest here in the life and witness of the European Churches. In our special wartime work we have tried to follow the story of the resistance of the European Churches to Nazism and to make that story known. May I tell

you something about what we have noticed in the course of our work?

First, about the new interest in, and knowledge of, European Church life. As a result of the marvellous resistance of European Christendom there is a constant demand for speakers on this subject. Books and pamphlets telling the story, as for example, "Christian Counter-attack," are widely read and sold. Many British theological writers are showing a special interest in Continental religious movements, especially in that named after the great Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. Both Anglican and Free Church writers refer more frequently to Luther and Calvin than has happened for a century or two. The presence in our midst of many refugees from the Continent has led to the formation of all sorts of International Christian Fellowships; Anglo-Dutch, Anglo-French and so on. The three great traditions of European Christianity, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, are coming to mean something quite real and vivid to English Christians. Chaplains accompanying the troops in the liberation of Europe are keen to learn all they can about the Christianity which they will find there.

What is the picture of European Christianity in wartime built up in our minds by careful observation and record? It is a picture of Churches resisting the subtle infiltration of the Nazi New Order at every point. Perhaps no organized body has put up so stiff a resistance on so wide a front as have the Christian Churches. We fully understand that this resistance is *spiritual* in character. In most countries Christian duty runs parallel to patriotic duty. Resistance to the invader of the homeland and to anti-Christian paganism both point in the same direction. But in Germany Christians are faced with a tragic dilemma. Loyalty to Christ make whole-hearted loyalty to an anti-Christian government impossible. Efforts are made by the Nazis, for instance, to make Christians in Germany choose between loyalty to Christ and loyalty to their Fatherland, but farseeing Christian leaders in Germany have refused to accept this view of the matter.

In the European Churches protests have become the order of the day. In the main these protests are against intrusion into the rightful liberties of the Church, against neopagan tendencies in education and propaganda, against actions which are in flat contradiction to Christian morality, e.g. the murder of the unfit, and the persecution of the Jews.

We have noted with immense admiration outstanding acts of courage by Christian leaders in many European lands. If we do

not mention them by name it is in order not to increase their difficulties.

We have noted with special interest the increasing co-operation between the Churches in the resistance movement. Stories of joint deputations of protest by Protestant and Roman Catholic dignitaries are read in Britain with great interest.

What of the future? Mr. Churchill has said that he hopes Europe will become again "a vital expression of Christendom." That is what we all want to see. To increase the chance of it becoming true we are anxious to establish as soon as possible after the war those fraternal links of friendship which in the past have bound British and European Churchmen together. A special Committee has been set up in this country which hopes to raise a large sum of money to assist the European Churches in their reconstruction work as and when they desire it. This must be a two-way traffic. It may be possible for British and American Christians to help with the material side of European reconstruction, but we have much to learn spiritually from those who have gone through the fiery trial of Nazi occupation.

I know I am speaking mainly this morning to English-speaking people and perhaps you are surprised that I have said so much about the Continental Churches. I want to suggest that you Britons, and lovers of Britain, scattered about the Continent in an apparently fortuitous way, should regard yourselves as an *advance guard for the knitting-up of severed friendships*. Take all the opportunities you get of making contact with Christian people in the country in which you live. In this way you can prepare the way for that new and closer œcumenical friendship which we hope will emerge when "this tyranny is over-past." Many of you are in such a position that you cannot do very much in an immediate, practical way. For some of you, your witness must be given by patient and courageous bearing of many trials. Like the recipients of St. Peter's letter—part of which (1 Peter 5, 5-11) we read just now, you too have "suffered awhile." You have been through a fiery trial of your faith, have known all kinds of agony of body, mind and spirit. We too in Britain have been with you, knowing through these war years at least something of the fellowship of suffering. But we share too the privilege of casting all our care upon God, for He cares for us all; we share His call to the glorious pathway of fellowship with Him; we share the hope that in, and through, and out of our suffering we may all be strengthened, established and settled in the right way. For it is the God of all grace who holds us with a mighty hand.